

(4) Identify and document the benefits of biodiesel (*e.g.*, lifecycle costing); and

(5) Gather data pertaining to information gaps and develop strategies to address the gaps.

(b) [Reserved]

Subpart C—Preparation of an Application

§ 2903.8 Program application materials.

OEPNU will publish periodic program announcements to notify potential applicants of the availability of funds for competitive continuation grants. The program announcement will provide information about obtaining program application materials.

§ 2903.9 Content of an application.

(a) Applications should be prepared following the guidelines and the instructions in the program announcement. At a minimum, applications shall include: a proposal cover page, project summary, project description, information about key personnel, documentation of collaborative arrangements, information about potential conflicts-of-interest, budget forms and a budget narrative, information about current and pending support, and assurance statements.

(b) Proper preparation of applications will assist reviewers in evaluating the merits of each application in a systematic, consistent fashion. Specific instructions regarding additional application content requirements and the ordering of application contents will be included in the program announcement. These will include instructions about paper size, margins, font type and size, line spacing, page numbering, the inclusion of illustrations, and electronic submission.

§ 2903.10 Submission of an application.

The program announcement will provide the deadline date for submitting an application, the number of copies of each application that must be submitted, and the address to which proposals must be submitted.

§ 2903.11 Acknowledgment of applications.

The receipt of all applications will be acknowledged. Applicants who do not receive an acknowledgment within 60 days of the submission deadline should contact the program contact indicated on the program announcement. Once the application has been assigned a proposal number, that number should be cited on all future correspondence.

Subpart D—Application Review and Evaluation

§ 2903.12 Application review.

(a) Reviewers will include government and non-government individuals. All reviewers will be selected based upon training and experience in relevant scientific, extension, or education fields, taking into account the following factors:

(1) The level of relevant formal scientific, technical education, or extension experience of the individual, as well as the extent to which an individual is engaged in relevant research, education, or extension activities; and

(2) The need to include as reviewers experts from various areas of specialization within relevant scientific, education, or extension fields.

(b) In addition, when selecting non-government reviewers, the following factors will be considered:

(1) The need to include as reviewers other experts (*e.g.*, producers, range or forest managers/operators, and consumers) who can assess relevance of the applications to targeted audiences and to program needs;

(2) The need to include as reviewers experts from a variety of organizational types (*e.g.*, colleges, universities, industry, state and Federal agencies, private profit and non-profit organizations) and geographic locations;

(3) The need to maintain a balanced composition of reviewers with regard to minority and female representation and an equitable age distribution; and

(4) The need to include reviewers who can judge the effective usefulness to producers and the general public of each application.

(c) Authorized departmental officers will compile application reviews and

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recommend awards to OEPNU. OEPNU will make final award decisions.

§ 2903.13 Evaluation criteria.

(a) The following evaluation criteria will be used in reviewing applications submitted for the Biodiesel Fuel Education Program:

(1) Relevance of proposed project to current and future issues related to the production, use, distribution, fuel quality, and fuel properties of biodiesel, including:

(i) Demonstrated knowledge about markets, state initiatives, impacts on local economies, regulatory issues, standards, and technical issues;

(ii) Demonstrated knowledge about issues associated with developing a biodiesel infrastructure; and

(iii) Quality and extent of stakeholder involvement in planning and accomplishment of program objectives.

(2) Reasonableness of project proposal, including:

(i) Sufficiency of scope and strategies to provide a consistent message in keeping with existing standards and regulations;

(ii) Adequacy of Project Description, suitability and feasibility of methodology to develop and implement program;

(iii) Clarity of objectives, milestones, and indicators of progress;

(iv) Adequacy of plans for reporting, assessing and monitoring results over project's duration; and

(v) Demonstration of feasibility, and probability of success.

(3) Technical quality of proposed project, including:

(i) Suitability and qualifications of key project personnel;

(ii) Institutional experience and competence in providing alternative fuel education, including:

(A) Demonstrated knowledge about programs involved in alternative fuel research and education;

(B) Demonstrated knowledge about other fuels, fuel additives, engine performance, fuel quality and fuel emissions;

(C) Demonstrated knowledge about Federal, State and local programs aimed at encouraging alternative fuel use;

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(D) Demonstrated ability in providing educational programs and developing technical programs; and

(E) Demonstrated ability to analyze technical information relevant to the biodiesel industry.

(iii) Adequacy of available or obtainable resources; and

(iv) Quality of plans to administer and maintain the project, including collaborative efforts, evaluation and monitoring efforts.

(b) [Reserved]

§ 2903.14 Conflicts of interest and confidentiality.

(a) During the peer evaluation process, extreme care will be taken to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may impact review or evaluation. Determinations of conflicts of interest will be based on the academic and administrative autonomy of an institution. The program announcement will specify the methodology for determining such autonomy.

(b) Names of submitting institutions and individuals, as well as application content and peer evaluations, will be kept confidential, except to those involved in the review process, to the extent permitted by law. In addition, the identities of peer reviewers will remain confidential throughout the entire review process. Therefore, the names of the reviewers will not be released to applicants. At the end of the fiscal year, names of reviewers will be made available in such a way that the reviewers cannot be identified with the review of any particular application.

Subpart E—Award Administration

§ 2903.15 General.

Within the limit of funds available for such purpose, the Authorized Departmental Officer (ADO) shall make grants to those responsible, eligible applicants whose applications are judged most meritorious under the procedures set forth in this part. The date specified by the ADO as the effective date of the grant shall be no later than September 30 of the Federal fiscal year in which the project is approved for support and funds are appropriated for such purpose, unless otherwise permitted by law. It should be noted that